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CC: Elizabeth Blackburn/DC/USEPA/US@EPA; Carolyn Hubbard/DC/USEPA/US@EPA
Subject: Inside EPA-Defending EPA Fracking Studies

Thought you might be interested in this. We have not yet received the letter from the Pavillion Area Concerned Citizens.

Defending EPA Fracking Studies

Posted: January 17, 2012

Citizen groups are staunchly defending draft EPA findings that hydraulic fracturing fluids likely contaminated a drinking water aquifer in Pavillion, WY -- a conclusion that has come under attack from industry, state and some GOP officials who fear the agency will use its study to support stricter controls on the controversial drilling practice.

In a [Jan. 12 letter](#) to EPA research chief Paul Anastas, Pavillion Area Concerned Citizens (PACC), a citizens' activist group in the area where EPA is investigating the contamination, urges the agency to forge ahead with its plan to take public comments on its [draft report](#) through Jan. 27.

"For those of us who live in EnCana's Pavillion/ Muddy Ridge gas field, [EPA] can't move quickly enough," John Fenton, the group's chair, says in the letter.

The letter counters criticism from [Encana Oil & Gas](#), the drilling company allegedly responsible for contamination in Fremont County, that the agency is moving ahead too quickly with its investigation and should suspend the public comment period pending clarification on how it plans to use the study.

Encana and other critics of EPA's draft Pavillion findings charge, among other things, that the agency has not delineated a theory by which the fracking fluids ended up in deep monitoring wells used in the study and the possibility that EPA's methodology contaminated the samples. The House Science, Space & Technology Committee's panel on energy and environment recently slated a hearing "Examining EPA's Approach to Ground Water Research: The Pavillion Analysis" for Feb. 1.

EPA's Pavillion study is one of two studies the agency is conducting of contamination alleged to have stemmed from fracking operations, prompting fears that the results could preempt a [broader study](#) the agency is conducting on risks to water from fracking.

But PACC and other groups are pushing back against the criticisms. The activist groups Powder River Basin Resource Council and Earthworks' Oil and Gas Accountability Project also launched a letter-signing campaign Jan. 17 to urge EPA to continue with its investigation, according to a press release the groups released the same day.

In the press release, Wilma Subra, an environmentalist who sits on the board of the State Review of Oil & Natural Gas Regulations, which reviews state oil and gas rules to ensure they are consistent, said EPA's investigation has been "scientifically sound."

Subra also defended EPA's data collection methods, which have been targeted by industry as potentially contaminating the water samples, saying that the agency did not compromise the integrity of the results by not immediately testing, and "If anything, longer hold times make the results less likely to indicate contamination."

Subra's remarks come as EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson is challenging remarks made by Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Michael Krancer in reference to a second groundwater investigation near hydraulic fracturing operations.

Jackson, speaking at a news conference in Philadelphia on Jan. 12, defended Region III's position that it needs to collect additional data on reported contamination in Dimock, PA, according to *Associated Press* reports.

In response to a Jan. 5 letter from Krancer calling the agency's understanding of the Dimock situation "rudimentary,"

Jackson called DEP's reaction "puzzling," adding that Krancer's comments would not help resolve the contamination.

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